

AU/ACSC/1528/2006-04

AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

LOOKING FOR GOLD NUGGETS IN THE MELTING POT:  
LANGUAGE, CULTURAL AWARENESS, AND THE FOURTH  
GENERATION WARRIOR

by

Timothy E. Stenmark, GS-14, USAF

A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

Advisor: Dr. Donald A. MacCuish

Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

April 2006

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE <b>APR 2006</b>		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-2006 to 00-00-2006</b>	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Looking for Gold Nuggets in the Melting Pot: Language, Cultural Awareness, and the Fourth Generation Warrior</b>				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>Air University Press (AUL/LP),131 W Shumacher Avenue,Maxwell AFB,AL,36112-6615</b>				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT <b>Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW) requires more than just superior technology, firepower, and "stand-off" capability. Fighting a 4GW adversary requires boots on the ground, functional language and cultural awareness to facilitate the collecting of actionable intelligence, the ability to know when and how to go kinetic, and more importantly, when to show restraint and patience. The training of friendly indigenous forces, civil affairs projects to restore and improve living conditions and independence, and building relationships with locals are significant factors in the effort to win the "hearts and minds" campaign. How to gain the all-important language and cultural awareness is a challenge facing our military forces, and the subject of this paper. Until recently, the focus has been on language and cultural training. By and large, when such training actually occurs, it has been limited, conducted "just in time" prior to deployment, and followed by on-site orientation and "on-the-job" training in theater. Some more rigorous training is being conducted, however. The Army Special Operations school has long recognized the value of longer-term learning, offering programs for more in-depth language and cultural training. Additional long-term language and cultural initiatives have been announced by the President, to help address the needs of "the long war." Whether such efforts will provide sufficient short- or long-term expertise, when supplemented by the skills of indigenous interpreters and coalition forces, is open to debate.</b>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT <b>Same as Report (SAR)</b>	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>41</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

## **Disclaimer**

The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the US government or the Department of Defense. In accordance with Air Force Instruction 51-303, it is not copyrighted, but is the property of the United States government.

## *Contents*

	<i>Page</i>
DISCLAIMER .....	II
PREFACE .....	V
ABSTRACT .....	VI
THE CHALLENGE .....	1
DEFINING THE NEED .....	2
IRAQ – THE CURRENT APPROACH – WHAT ARE WE DOING RIGHT? .....	4
Language and Culture Training .....	4
Marine Corps Training .....	5
Special Operations Forces .....	7
Army Cultural Awareness Training in Iraq .....	8
DIPPING INTO THE MELTING POT .....	10
Recent Initiatives .....	11
Changing the American Mindset .....	13
BARRIERS TO SUCCESS .....	15
Anglo-centric Pressures in the Homeland .....	15
Barriers to Retention of Heritage Language Skills .....	16
“Demonizing” and Stereotyping .....	16
The Enemy Within – Barriers Within the American Military .....	18
Attitudes in the Armed Forces .....	18
Lack of Muslim Chaplains in the Services .....	19
PUBLICIZED INCIDENTS THAT DISCOURAGE PARTICIPATION .....	21
A FRAGMENTED TALENT POOL .....	23
SEEDS OF HOPE FOR A GROWING IDENTITY .....	26
American Muslim, not Muslim-American .....	26
The Call for American Muslims to Serve .....	27
Military or Muslim? Resolving the Clash of Loyalties .....	27
WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING? .....	30

GLOSSARY .....	31
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	32

## *Preface*

This research project grew out of readings on Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW) and the growing consensus that language and cultural awareness can be key limiting factors to success against 4GW adversaries. The project examines efforts of the services to fill critical gaps in language skills and cultural awareness. Although I found a bit more evidence than expected of recent efforts to recruit heritage speakers, such programs are relatively new and have not yet demonstrated the ability to attract the targeted numbers of native speakers of critical languages. Additional DOD native speaker programs have been announced in response to the President's National Security Language Initiative, but their success could hinge on the issues discussed in this research paper. It is my hope to draw additional attention to a resource that is often overlooked, and to generate awareness of societal and cultural barriers we must overcome to effectively tap into it.

My thanks go to faculty advisor Dr. Don MacCuish, for his infectious enthusiasm for the study of 4GW issues and his ability to challenge his students to examine their readings with a critical eye, to broaden their sources and share ideas in an open and collaborative environment. A great deal of thanks also goes to my wife, Sharon, and son, Eric, for the sacrifices they have made as I have pursued an unusually mobile civilian career with the Air Force. They have shown great patience and tolerance for a rather nomadic lifestyle and the ability to adapt and deal with the disruptions that naturally occur, including this brief educational hiatus in the deep South.

### ***Abstract***

Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW) requires more than just superior technology, firepower, and “stand-off” capability. Fighting a 4GW adversary requires boots on the ground, functional language and cultural awareness to facilitate the collecting of actionable intelligence, the ability to know when and how to go kinetic, and more importantly, when to show restraint and patience. The training of friendly indigenous forces, civil affairs projects to restore and improve living conditions and independence, and building relationships with locals are significant factors in the effort to win the “hearts and minds” campaign. How to gain the all-important language and cultural awareness is a challenge facing our military forces, and the subject of this paper.

Until recently, the focus has been on language and cultural training. By and large, when such training actually occurs, it has been limited, conducted “just in time” prior to deployment, and followed by on-site orientation and “on-the-job” training in theater. Some more rigorous training is being conducted, however. The Army Special Operations school has long recognized the value of longer-term learning, offering programs for more in-depth language and cultural training. Additional long-term language and cultural initiatives have been announced by the President, to help address the needs of “the long war.” Whether such efforts will provide sufficient short- or long-term expertise, when supplemented by the skills of indigenous interpreters and coalition forces, is open to debate.

There is another source of these skills, however, if we just can tap into it. America's "melting pot" should provide a sufficiently large talent pool with the requisite language and cultural skills, if we take steps to maximize our ability to recruit from it. This paper examines the need for language and cultural proficiency, as evidenced by their use to combat current insurgencies, the effectiveness of current efforts to gain relevant language and cultural skills, long-term strategies proposed by the current Administration, and the prospects and potential barriers to their success.



## The Challenge

*If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.*

—Sun Tzu

We are an outside western force combating a 4GW adversary fueled by religious fervor. Our adversary will not mass and face our forces in conventional conflict. Their leaders hide in remote mountain caves or move from safe house to safe house, exhibiting patience and an understanding of the long-term nature of the conflict. Their agents are essentially indistinguishable from the general populace and are motivated by visions of the rewards of martyrdom to destroy western influences and even innocents by suicide attacks and improvised explosive devices (IED). Their aim is to exploit the media and undermine the confidence of the local populace in the coalition forces and their efforts to encourage the establishment of a stable, democratic government. They test the limited patience of western democracies for combating insurgencies and intend to erode the public will to “stay the course.” The nature of the adversary drives the requirement for advanced language and cultural understanding to build relationships, develop human intelligence (HUMINT) sources, and show the wisdom to know when “going kinetic” does more harm than good. How can an “English language-centric” American military acquire the language and cultural skills needed for success in current and future 4GW conflicts?

## Defining the Need

The persistence of the insurgency in Iraq and the threat of further attacks by radical Islamic terrorists led Anthony H. Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies to highlight the continuing weakness of US forces in the areas of language and cultural skills and their critical importance in the conflict in Iraq:

US and allied Coalition forces cannot create secure areas because they are seen as occupiers and lack the area expertise, language skills, HUMINT, and stable personal contacts to know if the insurgents are present or the area is really secure. Iraq is a good example of a case where an ally may be able to eventually make areas secure, but where the political dimension is critical, and Coalition forces cannot.

In Iraq's case, in Vietnam, and in many other cases; the problem is that the US cannot drain the swamp. It is dealing with a foreign country, different religions and ideologies, and different goals and values. It is perceived by a significant percentage of the people as an invader, occupier, neo-colonial power, "crusader," or simply as selfishly serving its own interests. Language alone presents serious problems, and American public diplomacy is too ethnocentric to be effective.

The US can encourage political, economic, and social reform, but cannot implement it. Like Iraqis, people must find their own leaders, political structures, and methods of governance. The US lacks basic competence in the economics of nation building in societies whose economic structures, ability to execute reform and projects, and perceived values differ significantly from the US.<sup>1</sup>

Some academics in the US military are voicing similar concerns, particularly with regard to the need for greater cultural awareness at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. A recent article in Joint Force Quarterly (JFQ), for example, emphasized awareness of tribal affiliation and patronage systems in Iraqi society as vital to understanding what motivates some insurgent attacks (to avenge the blood of a relative,

to demonstrate manly courage in battle, or to uphold manly honor) and the critical role such social structures play in political stabilization and reconstruction efforts.<sup>2</sup> Predeployment cultural training, when available, tends to be rushed and oversimplified, focusing on language basics and a handful of cultural faux pas to avoid.<sup>3</sup> The author of the JFQ article finds our cultural awareness woefully inadequate, endangering both troops and civilians at the tactical level, threatening our ability to avoid adverse public opinion at the operational level, and producing policies that tend to strengthen the insurgency instead of defeating it.<sup>4</sup>

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) also identified improving linguistic skills and cultural competence as essential to victory in “the long war.”<sup>5</sup> What are we doing now to build language and cultural awareness skills for the continuing conflict in Iraq and the larger “long war” against terrorism? Is there a pool of talent we can draw from the American “melting pot” to help fill critical gaps in language and cultural awareness? If so, what are the barriers to recruiting and retaining such talent in the armed forces?

---

<sup>1</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, “The Iraq War and Its Strategic Lessons for Counterinsurgency,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC, 8 December 2005, 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> Montgomery McFate, “The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture” *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 38 (July 2005): 43-44.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-44.

<sup>5</sup> Center for Regional & Cultural Studies, “Need in General – See also 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report,” 24 January 2006, <http://www.au.af.mil/culture/need.htm>.

## **Iraq – The Current Approach – What are we doing right?**

*Learning a language - somebody else's language - is a kind of gesture. It's a gesture of interest. It really is a fundamental way to reach out to somebody and say, "I care about you. I want you to know that I'm interested in not only how you talk, but how you live."*

—President George W. Bush

The lack of Arabic speakers in the Army was exposed after the April 2003 fall of Baghdad, when officers resorted to sign language to communicate with local citizens.<sup>6</sup> The few Arabic-speaking soldiers were not native speakers, and not fluent in the local dialect.<sup>7</sup> Two years later, one major had a sole native Arabic-speaking soldier in his brigade of between 3,500 and 4,000 soldiers.<sup>8</sup> Lynne McCann, chief of the Army Foreign Language Proponency Office, estimates only about 2,000 of the 492,000 soldiers on active-duty have some level of Arabic-speaking skill; the number fluent in Arabic are fewer still.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, many initiatives to address the severe shortage of Arabic speakers in the military appear unfocused and “too little, too late.”

### **Language and Culture Training**

Training in essential language and cultural awareness skills helps ensure Special Operations Forces (SOF) and Marine Expeditionary Units (Special Operations Capable) are capable of doing their mission in Iraq and other parts of the world. Such training, however, as well as cultural awareness given to soldiers in theater, appears to be “too

---

<sup>6</sup> Tom Bowman, “Military aims to bolster language skills,” *Peace Corps Online*, 2 January 2006, <http://peacecorpsonline.org/messages/messages/2629/2039494.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

little, too late” or too focused on superficial cultural elements to provide a basis for effective communication and cultural awareness. The following examples illustrate the limited levels of skill which come from such training.

### **Marine Corps Training**

Members of the 22<sup>nd</sup> MEU(SOC) received 13 days of intensive training on their trans-Atlantic voyage aboard the amphibious assault ships of their Expeditionary Strike Group.<sup>10</sup> The Marines received immersion-style training up to five hours per day from two Arabic linguists to learn basic language skills, to include familiarity with key phrases, commands, and such things as numbers, time and days of the week.<sup>11</sup> The increased familiarity and the sense of comfort in the mission environment could mean the difference between success and failure in combat situations.<sup>12</sup> Leadership acknowledges, however, that such limited “just in time” training cannot provide fluency in the language.<sup>13</sup>

Major General Stephen Johnson, commander of the II Marine Expeditionary Forces Forward, ordered each infantry squadron to have at least one Marine who speaks rudimentary Arabic before redeployment to Iraq in early 2005.<sup>14</sup> As a result, over 260 Marines took Arabic language courses at a nearby community college to learn basic grammar, military vocabulary and conversational Arabic.<sup>15</sup> The 160 hours of Arabic classes over 20 working days are expected to develop skills to help Marines man

---

<sup>10</sup> 22nd MEU, “Language skills add another tool to warriors’ kitbags,” *Marine Corps News*, 18 November 2005, <http://www.usmc.mil/marinelink/mcn2000.nsf>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Barbara Ferguson, “US Marines Arming Themselves With Arabic,” *Arab News*, 29 December 2004, <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=48section=08article=56724&day=29&m=12&y=2004>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

checkpoints and conduct house searches without having to constantly depend on interpreters.<sup>16</sup> The students also received 26 CDs in Arabic to continue their learning beyond the classroom.<sup>17</sup> Many of the Marines are preparing for their second or third deployment in Iraq, and understand the importance of “arming themselves with Arabic.”<sup>18</sup>

Real-life scenarios are the basis for culture awareness classes provided to Marines at Camp Lejeune, NC, as they prepare for deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).<sup>19</sup> The training includes dealing with translators, basic behavior of Iraqis and understanding Arabic names.<sup>20</sup> “I give them pretty much three briefs that help them understand the Muslim and Arab culture,” said Maj Ed Sullivan, instructor and OIF veteran.<sup>21</sup> “But too many times, these briefs put up barriers and make the Arab people seem even more foreign,” Sullivan admitted.<sup>22</sup>

Headquarters Marine Corps recently approved an Arabic linguist re-enlistment incentive program to help cope with a shortage of culturally aware and language enabled Marines.<sup>23</sup> The program offers Marines the opportunity to become an Arabic translator as a second military occupational specialty (MOS).<sup>24</sup> Eligible Marines will receive 63 weeks of Defense Language Institute training in written and spoken Arabic dialects,

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Cpl Adam C. Schnell, “Arab Culture Classes Prepare Marines,” *Defend America News*, 10 January 2005, <http://www.defendamerica.mil/articles/jan2005/a011005wd2.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> PFC Drew W. Barker, “Marine Corps responds to demand for Arabic linguists,” *Marine Corps News*, 5 May 2005, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2005/05/mil-050512-usmc06.htm>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

history, culture, and government structure of the Arabic community in the Middle East.<sup>25</sup> The classes are the equivalent of 36 semester hours of university level instruction.<sup>26</sup> Marines who already hold a secondary MOS of Arabic translator can receive a sizeable monetary reenlistment bonus, provided they deploy for at least 179 days within the next two years following their re-enlistment.<sup>27</sup>

### **Special Operations Forces**

Soldiers enrolled in the Special Operations Language Program at the US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) showcase their language and cultural skills at an annual Cultural Day.<sup>28</sup> The event includes performances of native dances, traditional music, costumes, ceremonies and traditional foods.<sup>29</sup> The infusion of cultural awareness is not new to the Special Operations training programs, but SWCS is placing a greater emphasis on ensuring the students have a strong cultural awareness of the countries where they will serve.<sup>30</sup> “What is language without context?” asked Maj Rodney Rose, commander of the unit charged with language training. “A Soldier can learn a language, but if they don’t understand the context and nuances of that language, they won’t be as effective.”<sup>31</sup> The language instructors – all native speakers – share their culture with students on a daily basis, whether it is by teaching proper greetings or showcasing traditional music or dance.<sup>32</sup> True cultural awareness of tribal relationships, religious and societal motivations for insurgent activities, and effective fluency on the

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Janice Burton, “Cultural skills – More than just language,” *Tip of the Spear*, Nov 2005, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

level of a native speaker, to include the nuances of pertinent dialects, would seem to be unachievable goals, however, for a language training program which lasts a maximum of six months.<sup>33</sup>

### **Army Cultural Awareness Training in Iraq**

Civil Affairs specialists incorporated a team of Iraqi professionals, college students and former military officers to provide an Arab perspective on cultural awareness training conducted for the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division midway through their deployment in Iraq.<sup>34</sup> The instructors explained the history of Islam, religious practices and sensitivities during the holy month of Ramadan, the treatment of women, food customs, and basic Arabic words and phrases.<sup>35</sup> The soldiers also learned that many of the attacks against the multi-national forces are motivated by the cultural need to seek revenge to restore honor and dignity.<sup>36</sup> “We all received training at mobilization, to be able to come here,” said Staff Sgt. Karen Helsley of the 458<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, “but when you hear it from the source, it kind of hits home a little differently.”<sup>37</sup>

It is important that all troops deploying to Iraq receive at least basic language and cultural awareness training. There is a clear need for language and cultural understanding at a deeper level, however. The challenges inherent in trying to teach such skills at a level of competence that inspires confidence among members of the local populace should lead to consideration of additional options. Recruitment of native or heritage speakers would seem a natural source of true fluency and cultural awareness for current

---

<sup>33</sup> Special Forces Language School, “Language Training,” [http://www.training.sfahq.com/language\\_training.htm](http://www.training.sfahq.com/language_training.htm).

<sup>34</sup> Staff Sgt Susan German, “Cultural Sensitivity Makes a Difference,” *Defend America News*, 19 October 2004, [http://222.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/dod/cultural\\_sensitivity.htm](http://222.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/dod/cultural_sensitivity.htm).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.



and future operations. Unfortunately, recruitment from such sources has only recently received emphasis.

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

## Dipping into the Melting Pot

*Because I am Middle Eastern and speak the language, it will be easy for me to gain the Iraqi people's trust. I know I can contribute to the war effort and am grateful for my abilities that have enabled me to be a part of this experience.*

—Marine Lance Corporal Ahmad M. Ibrahim

Native Arabic speakers in our military services provide sterling examples of how effective true language fluency and cultural awareness can be in the field.

Marine Lance Corporal Ahmad M. Ibrahim was born in Kuwait and raised in Syria until he was eleven.<sup>38</sup> He is confident his native proficiency in Arabic will enhance the ability of his fellow Marines to help the Iraqi people.<sup>39</sup> An administrative clerk and certified interpreter preparing to deploy with his unit to Iraq, Ibrahim is excited about the prospect of experiencing Iraqi culture.<sup>40</sup> He also understands the value his abilities can bring to the war effort.<sup>41</sup> “I don’t want to be five miles away from what is going on,” he said, “I need to be right there with my fellow Marines communicating directly with the Iraqi people.”<sup>42</sup>

The native Gulf Arabic language skills of Kuwaiti-born Marine Corporal Yousef A. Badou have helped him perform many functions during OIF, to include civil affairs, border patrols, reconnaissance, working with Iraqi soldiers and detainees, and even

---

<sup>38</sup> Pfc Lucian Field, “Why I Serve: Arabic-Speaking Marine Looks Forward to Iraq Deployment,” *DefenseLINK News*, 10 November 2004, [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2004/n11102004\\_2004111015.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2004/n11102004_2004111015.html).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

coping with combat situations.<sup>43</sup> “Sgt. Bryan Seibert and I were on patrol near the Syrian border near Al Qa’im when we noticed some suspicious men and I was able to trick them into thinking we were locals by speaking with them,” Badou said. “We got closer to them and we were able to capture them even though it was two against eight.”<sup>44</sup> On another occasion, “Sgt Seibert and I were attacking Syrian smugglers when the border patrol approached. I yelled and told who we were and they remembered me. Then I told them which direction the insurgents were. They could’ve fired on us thinking it was a smuggler posing as a service member.”<sup>45</sup> Cpl Badou sees his job as a scout with Arabic language skills as a force multiplier.<sup>46</sup> In October 2005 he was on his third deployment conducting counter-insurgency operations with Iraqi Security Forces.<sup>47</sup>

### **Recent Initiatives**

Having native language speakers like Lance Corporal Ibrahim and Corporal Badou is a clear advantage to deployed forces in a 4GW environment. Could focused recruitment attract more native language speakers and have better results than efforts to train non-native speakers? The 2000 Census indicates more than 1.2 million people of Arabic ancestry live in the United States, with concentrations of Arabic speakers (50,000 or more) in several major populations centers, including New York City, Los Angeles,

---

<sup>43</sup> Cpl Ken Melton, “Kuwaiti-born Marine on Third Deployment in Iraq,” *Defend America News*, 28 October 2005, <http://www.defendamerica.mil/articles/oct2005/a102805pj1.html>.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Detroit, and Chicago.<sup>48</sup> In fact, recent initiatives have focused on recruiting native speakers of languages common to the Middle East.

In February of 2003, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs was tasked to recruit native speakers of Arabic, Dari, and Pashto to assist US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan with interpretation, translation, cultural familiarity and understanding of body language.<sup>49</sup> The program director hoped to recruit 250 soldiers for the new Translator Aid career field in 2005, with a steady-state goal of 700 within a few years.<sup>50</sup> Recruits will have a commitment to the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) for eight years, with mobilization for various tours and assignments.<sup>51</sup> Once in the military, non-citizens are eligible for expedited US citizenship.<sup>52</sup> Recruitment of the first native speakers of these languages into the Army IRR began in August 2003, but over the next 20 months only 77 new recruits were trained and mobilized under the program, far short of the 2005 goal.<sup>53</sup>

A similar Army National Guard recruiting program began in early 2005 to take advantage of the Guard's community contacts and relationships.<sup>54</sup> Focusing on recruiting native speakers in twenty different languages and dialects, most spoken in the Middle East, the Guard recruitment program initially began in Michigan, Texas, and California, states which have large Arab-American populations.<sup>55</sup> The goal was 50 recruits by the

---

<sup>48</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "QT-P13. Ancestry: 2000," <http://factfinder.census.gov>; and Modern Language Association, Census language maps, [http://www.mla.org/census\\_map](http://www.mla.org/census_map).

<sup>49</sup> Terri Lukach, "Army Native Linguist Recruiting Program," *American Forces Press Service*, 24 April 2005, [http://usmilitary.about.com/od/armyjoin/a/nativelinguist\\_p.htm](http://usmilitary.about.com/od/armyjoin/a/nativelinguist_p.htm).

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Donna Miles, "New Program Recruits Native Speakers into Army Guard," *DefenseLINK News*, 9 August 2005, [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Aug2005/20050809\\_2378.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Aug2005/20050809_2378.html).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

end of the program's first full year.<sup>56</sup> As of early August 2005, the program had recruited 15 members, most with prior military experience.<sup>57</sup>

The Department of Defense also seeks to add 1000 new linguists over the next few years by establishing a Civilian Linguist Reserve Corps.<sup>58</sup>

In each of these programs, the goal is to recruit native speakers of critical languages into the enlisted ranks strictly to serve as Translator Aids or as civilians in an assistive linguistics corps. While these initiatives may serve as a short-term fix in the current conflict, they will not grow competent, language-fluent and culture-sensitive soldiers and leaders with the other 4GW skills needed for the long war.

### **Changing the American Mindset**

The current Administration is taking steps that could eventually change Americans' negative perception of foreign language proficiency. Early this year, the President announced a National Security Language Initiative to increase the number of Americans fluent in critical-need languages, to include Arabic, Farsi, Chinese, Russian, and Hindi.<sup>59</sup> The program, which will involve the departments of State, Defense, and Education, as well as the National Intelligence Directorate, will seek to increase the number of foreign language teachers and necessary resources, encourage teaching critical foreign languages at younger ages, and increase the number of advanced-level speakers of foreign languages.<sup>60</sup> DoD's efforts will expand offerings at the Defense Language Institute and

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Gerry J. Gilmore, "Bush Kicks Off National Foreign Language Initiative," *DefenseLINK News*, 5 January 2006, [http://defenselink.mil/news/Jan2006/20060105\\_3849.html](http://defenselink.mil/news/Jan2006/20060105_3849.html).

<sup>59</sup> Stern, Robert. "Foreign language initiative praised," *The Times of Trenton*, 22 Jan 2006, <http://www.ny.com/base/news-4.1137920754142390.xml&coll=5>.

<sup>60</sup> Gilmore, "Bush Kicks Off Initiative."

the nation's service academies, increase immersion and exchange programs, and fund language programs at colleges and universities with affiliated ROTC programs.<sup>61</sup> The Air Force will implement new foreign language and cultural awareness curricula into its Air Command and Staff College, Air War College and senior non-commissioned officer academies, beginning this fall.<sup>62</sup> The institutions will offer Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, French and Spanish courses as part of regional awareness studies geared to prepare Airmen for combat operations on an increasingly global battlefield.<sup>63</sup>

While seeking to emphasize foreign language education earlier in life is an admirable and worthwhile goal, training non-native speakers to become fluent and culturally proficient is a long-term effort. For both the short and long term, such efforts must continue to be supplemented by programs to recruit and retain service members who have native skill to speak these critical foreign languages. However, even maintaining foreign language fluency in the American "melting pot" can prove to be a daunting task.

---

<sup>61</sup> Bowman, "Military to bolster language."

<sup>62</sup> Carlos Munoz, "Moseley-approved plans to revamp language, cultural training take shape," *Inside the Air Force*, 22 February 2006, <http://aimpoint.hq.af.mil/display.cfm?id=9537>

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

## Barriers to Success

*Even with the Chinese I speak, I am limited to the normal yet shallow “everyday” conversations I have with my parents and do not have enough of a vocabulary to have meaningful talks with them. Such was the case just the other night when they asked me what my major at Berkeley was but I did not know the phrase for “Biology,” much less, “Molecular and Cellular Biology.” The best I could manage was “science” in Chinese and explained the rest in English; I could not communicate to them why I selected this major, what I was going to do with it, and so forth – we ended the discussion by changing the subject.*

—University Student of Immigrant Parents

Many cultural and societal barriers impede our ability to maintain and tap into foreign language talent within the United States. Among these barriers are Anglo-centric pressures in the homeland and challenges within the military.

### Anglo-centric Pressures in the Homeland

Emma Lazarus’ *The New Colossus* at the base of the Statue of Liberty may encourage the world to “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free,” but admission to America’s “melting pot” often comes at a price.<sup>64</sup> For most coming to our shores, that price is the gradual loss of native language and cultural identity, borne in part by first generation immigrants, but to a greater extent by their children and grandchildren.<sup>65</sup> With the possible exception of the resilient and frequently replenished Hispanic community, immigrant populations tend shed their differences

---

<sup>64</sup> E.D. Hirsh, Jr., Joseph F. Kett and James Trefil, *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002, <http://www.bartleby.com/59/6/givemeyourti.html>.

<sup>65</sup> Leanne Hinton, “Involuntary Language Loss among Immigrants: Asian-American Linguistic Autobiographies,” *ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics*, Washington D.C., December 1999, <http://www.ericdigests.org/2000-3/loss.htm>.

fairly quickly, in response to both internal and external pressures to conform and to succeed in American society.<sup>66</sup> These internal and external pressures create barriers to retention of heritage language skills and restrict our ability to capitalize on the language and cultural skills of those who successfully retain them.

### **Barriers to Retention of Heritage Language Skills**

The assimilative powers of the American melting pot are dramatically evidenced in the erosion of heritage language skills among immigrants and first and second generation residents.<sup>67</sup> For decades, language studies have examined factors which contribute to rapid involuntary language loss among the children and grandchildren of immigrants. Such factors can include patriotic and peer pressure to fully adopt English and reject the heritage language, shame about looking or sounding different, strong parental encouragement to learn English and succeed in American society, fear of demonstrating a lack of fluency when confronted by heritage language-speaking relatives or groups, a lack of ethnic enclaves or social motivations to maintain the language, and the lack of practical applications for heritage language in American daily life.<sup>68</sup>

### **“Demonizing” and Stereotyping**

Historically, Americans have shown a strong tendency to “demonize” our military adversaries and project negative stereotypes toward members of ethnic groups in our midst.<sup>69</sup> Arabs have been demonized and stereotyped for decades; many portrayals in modern American media depict characters from this ethnic group as ruthless, wild-eyed,

---

<sup>66</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, “The Hispanic Challenge,” *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2004, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story\\_id=2495](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=2495)

<sup>67</sup> Hinton, “Involuntary Language Loss.”

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ivanna Chebli, “The Portrayal of Arabs in American Media,” 2001, <http://iml.jou.edu/projects/Spring01/Chebli/page4/htm>.



fanatical terrorists.<sup>70</sup> Movie depictions in *True Lies* [1994], *Rules of Engagement* [2000], and even the light-hearted comedy *Back to the Future* [1985] are clear examples of this trend.<sup>71</sup>

Following the attacks of 9-11, many Americans acted out their anti-Arab anger and hunger for retribution through hate mail, physical attacks and vandalism.<sup>72</sup> Amnesty International reported more than 540 attacks on Arab-Americans in the week following September 11<sup>th</sup>.<sup>73</sup> For a country which prides itself on the rule of law and civil rights, the number and ferocity of these unjustified, frequently misdirected, and sometimes deadly incidents were shocking. Highly publicized cases, such as the 15 September 2001 shooting death of an immigrant Sikh Indian gas station owner in Mesa, Arizona, illustrate the extent to which fear and stereotyping can lead to senseless, deadly violence (Sikhs are not Muslims, but some Sikh men, with their beards and turbans, may be similar in appearance to Usama bin Laden).<sup>74</sup>

In the months immediately following the attacks of 9-11, hate crimes against Muslims increased by 34 times.<sup>75</sup> The Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) reported hate crimes against people believed to be of Middle Eastern descent jumped 4000 percent before dropping and remaining steady at nearly twice the incident rate before the 9-11 attacks.<sup>76</sup> Even with the decline in actual hate crimes, however, the post-9-11 flood of negative perceptions, stereotyping, and violent incidents, combined

---

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> PBS, "Not In Our Town - Attacks on Arab Americans Post 9/11," [http://www.pbs.org/niot/citizens\\_respond/losalstos.html](http://www.pbs.org/niot/citizens_respond/losalstos.html).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> CNN, "Man questioned in shooting death of Sikh," 16 September 2001, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/16/gen.mesa.shooting>.

<sup>75</sup> Solana Pyne, "Making Enemies – Post 9-11 Crackdowns Spurring Prejudice," *The Village Voice*, 9-15 July 2003, <http://www.villagevoice.com/issue/0328/pyne.php>.

with government screening efforts to identify and detain individuals who might pose homeland security threats, could deter many Arab-Americans from offering their linguistic abilities and cultural understanding to the US military for “the long war.”

### **The Enemy Within – Barriers Within the American Military**

Members of the American military have been known to participate in demonization, stereotyping, and discriminatory behavior when it comes to people of Arabic descent. Even prior to 9-11, such tendencies were evident in the military. Recent highly publicized incidents and systemic barriers hint at the depth of the problem and the challenges our armed forces must overcome if they are to consistently attract and retain the critical skills of Arab- and Muslim-Americans to assist in fighting “the long war.”

#### **Attitudes in the Armed Forces**

“The military has a tendency to demonize the enemy, and Muslims are on the receiving end of that hostility,” says Jeff Hammad, a Muslim Palestinian-American who served as a Marine from 1990 to 1994.<sup>77</sup> He noticed a shift in attitudes toward Muslims, including the disparagement of his faith, during the build-up to the first Gulf War.<sup>78</sup> The battle cries of fellow Marines included “Let’s go Muslim hunting,” and “Kill ragheads!”<sup>79</sup> In the aftermath of the attacks of 9-11, Hammad believes the situation is growing progressively worse for Muslims in the military, as evidenced by experiences of siblings in the Marines and the Texas Air National Guard.<sup>80</sup> The problem does not

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Don Lattin, “Muslims in the military walk fine line – War tensions put pressure on rising minority,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 9 April 2003, <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/04/09/MN188241.DTL>.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

appear to rest solely on the attitudes and actions of individual soldiers or their military units, but could involve a moral conflict for some devout Muslims. “It’s getting harder and harder for Muslims in the service to morally justify being in a military that seems constantly engaged against fellow Muslims,” Hammad stated in an interview less than a month after the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).<sup>81</sup> Since the date of his interview, the mistreatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib and other facilities would seem to support the contention that some service members lack respect not only for Muslims, but also for standards of decency and respect for prisoner rights under the Geneva Convention.<sup>82</sup>

That perception is not universal among Muslims in the military, however. Technical Sergeant Abdul-Basir Lipscomb, an African-American who converted to the Muslim faith in 1997, disagrees.<sup>83</sup> He commends the treatment he has received in the Air Force. “All of my co-workers and commanders have been respectful,” said Lipscomb, who is one of six military Muslims approved to make a pilgrimage to Mecca while stationed in Saudi Arabia in 1999.<sup>84</sup>

### **Lack of Muslim Chaplains in the Services**

Being a devout Muslim in the American military is not without basic challenges, however. The first Muslim Army chaplain was appointed in 1993.<sup>85</sup> At the start of OIF, there were fourteen Muslim chaplains in the four branches of the military service.<sup>86</sup> Such a limited corps of chaplains, even when supplemented by Muslim chaplains from

---

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Mark Mazzetti, Julian E. Barnes, and Edward T. Pound with David Kaplan and Linda Robinson. “Inside the Iraq Prison Scandal,” in *The Art of Military Leadership Course I – Character and Influence, AY 06*. Edited by Sharon McBride, Maxwell AFB AL: Air Command and Staff College, August 2005: 95-99.

<sup>83</sup> Lattin, “Muslims in the military.”

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

the Reserve forces, cannot hope to meet the spiritual needs of Muslim service members, particularly when the force is deployed to numerous, far-flung duty locations. Chaplains of other faiths can provide some support, to include common counseling services and helping commanders and service members “deal with the myths” and “defuse misgivings” about Muslims. Unfortunately, highly publicized incidents which question the patriotism, loyalty, and integrity of Muslims in the service, including those involving Muslim chaplains, create additional barriers to recruitment of Arab-speaking Muslims into the military.

## Publicized Incidents that Discourage Participation

*I suppose they want to punk me or just humiliate me. Perhaps they feel that I will not do anything about that. They are right about that. I am not going to do anything about it as long as I stay here. But as soon as I am in Iraq, I am going to try and kill as many of them as possible . . . I will have to decide to kill my Muslim brothers fighting for Saddam Hussein or my battle buddies. I am hoping to get into a position so I don't have to take any crap from anyone anymore.*

—Diary entries of Army Sergeant Hasan Akbar

The actions of one Muslim-American soldier during the opening days of OIF put into question the loyalty and honor of all serving Arab and Muslim-Americans.<sup>87</sup> Although mistreatment by other soldiers and feelings of solidarity with other Muslims appear to have been contributing factors, Sergeant Hasan Akbar's unexpected and deadly grenade and rifle attack on fellow members of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in Kuwait caused untold damage to unit cohesion and undermined military and homeland confidence in Arab and Muslim-Americans.<sup>88</sup> Akbar was convicted by a military jury of premeditated murder and attempted murder.<sup>89</sup> Unfortunately, the Akbar "fragging" has not been the sole highly-visible incident of perceived disloyalty by Arab- and Muslim-American service members since 9-11.

Removal of classified information from the Guantanamo Bay detention camp by a Muslim Army chaplain triggered investigations of suspected espionage.<sup>90</sup> Captain James

---

<sup>87</sup> Associated Press, "GI Wrote About Killing," 15 April 2005, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,3566,153490,00.html>.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Associated Press, "Akbar Convicted of Murder," 22 April 2005, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,3566,154220,00.html>.

<sup>90</sup> Associated Press, "Muslim Chaplain Gets Clean Slate," 15 April 2004, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/11/29/terror/585986.shtml>.

Yee eventually faced charges of mishandling classified material, failure to obey an order, making a false official statement, adultery, and conduct unbecoming an officer, but all charges were dropped by Army officials, who claim national security concerns prevented them from seeking conviction in an open court-martial.<sup>91</sup> Yee was given a reprimand for adultery and misuse of a government computer for downloading pornography, but it was later overturned by the commander of US Southern Command.<sup>92</sup> The case not only called into question the loyalty and trustworthiness of Muslims and chaplains, but caused many to question the capability, judgment, and integrity of the military leadership.<sup>93</sup>

The bizarre case of the Lebanese-born Marine Arabic interpreter who disappeared in Iraq, appeared in a purported hostage video, and then surfaced as a free man in Lebanon, also called into question the loyalty and reliability of Arab-American service members.<sup>94</sup> Corporal Wassef Ali Hassoun was charged with desertion after he refused to divulge details of his 21 June 2004 disappearance and sixteen day absence from the First Marine Expeditionary Force in Fallujah.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Laura Parker, "The ordeal of Chaplain Yee," 16 May 2004, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2004-05-16-yee-cover\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2004-05-16-yee-cover_x.htm).

<sup>94</sup> Mike Mount, "Marine 'hostage' charged with desertion," *CNN.com*, 10 December 2004, <http://www.cnn.com/2004/LAW/12/09/hassoun.desert/>.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

## A Fragmented Talent Pool

*The growth of Islam in America, driven by migration and conversions, has created a diverse and multicultural Muslim community. . . . Composed of people from all races, and from nearly every country on the planet, American Muslims have rapidly become a microcosm of the global Muslim community. The politics of identity and identity formation that are shaping the American Muslim community cannot be fully understood until the internal diversity within the community is fully appreciated.*

- Muqtedar Khan

American Muslims are not an homogenous group. Not all Muslims are speakers of Arabic, and their ethnic groupings, countries of origin, affiliations and feelings of identity vary greatly, fragmenting the available recruitment pool.

A Cornell University study in 2002 assessed the Muslim population in the US at between six and eight million, while the 2000 census identified just 614,582 Arabic speakers.<sup>96</sup> The disparity between these figures is great, but not surprising; the vast majority of Muslims in American are non-Arabs.<sup>97</sup> A 2000 study by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) indicates Sunnis attending mosques in the US are predominantly non-Arab, with 33 percent South Asian, 30 percent African American, and only 25 percent of Arabic heritage, with remaining small percentages from other ethnic groups.<sup>98</sup> Ethnicity in itself may not be a significant divisive factor, however. Mosques in America have become quite diverse in recent years; nearly 90% of masjids

---

<sup>96</sup> Edina Lekovic, "MPAC Releases Survey on Attitudes of American Muslim Youth," 30 November 2005, <http://www.mpac.org>; Modern Language Association, "Census Map: Number of speakers per language in the entire US," [http://www.mla.org/census\\_map](http://www.mla.org/census_map).

<sup>97</sup> Ihsan Bagby, et. al. "The Mosque in American: A National Portrait," 26 April 2001, 3, [http://www.cair-net.org/mosquereport/Masjid\\_Study\\_Project\\_2000\\_Report.pdf](http://www.cair-net.org/mosquereport/Masjid_Study_Project_2000_Report.pdf).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

(congregations) were attended by members of each of the three largest Muslim ethnic groups, according to the 2000 CAIR study.<sup>99</sup> While these findings may indicate ethnicity is not a major divisive factor for individual congregations, ethnicity and additional factors such as country of origin, ideology, and related specific communities of interest create internal barriers to the development of a coherent religious and political American Muslim identity.<sup>100</sup>

Internal planes of cleavage, based on ethnic groupings, countries of origin, ideology, and political interests, tend to fragment the Muslim community, leaving no unifying cultural identity.<sup>101</sup> There are indications, however, that the current war on terrorism, the new political and social realities of the post-9-11 world, and generalized anti-Muslim hostility and prejudice may be generating a negative, unifying cultural identity – and creating another American minority “victim class.”<sup>102</sup> A non-scientific survey of 200 young American Muslims in 2005 found 44 percent felt conflict between their American identity and their Muslim identity.<sup>103</sup> While 60 percent believe they are accepted as part of the nation’s pluralism, 70 percent said they noticed “significant hostility” toward Muslims in the general American public.<sup>104</sup>

Muslim academics and leaders have long seen the need for unity to harness their community’s size and potential to have political impact.<sup>105</sup> Since 9-11, they have also voiced the growing need for a positive American Muslim identity, to connect more

---

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Muqtedar Khan, “The Case for an American Muslim Identity – Barriers to American Muslims’ political cohesiveness are largely internal,” 28 July 2000, [http://www.beliefnet.com/story/35/story\\_3508\\_1.html](http://www.beliefnet.com/story/35/story_3508_1.html).

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Muqtedar Khan, “Putting the American in ‘American Muslim’,” 7 September 2003, <http://www.ijtihad.org/NYTimes1.htm>.

<sup>103</sup> Muslim Public Affairs Council, “Special Report: Religion and Identity of Muslim American Youth Post-London Attacks,” 30 November 2005, [http://www.mpac.org/home\\_article\\_display.aspx?ITEM=842](http://www.mpac.org/home_article_display.aspx?ITEM=842).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.



closely to mainstream American society and ensure the community's civil rights are protected, so as not to become "foreigners in our own homeland."<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Khan, "American Muslim Identity."

<sup>106</sup> Khan, "Putting the American."

## Seeds of Hope for a Growing Identity

*For any American, the “American Identity” is a constitutional identity and not an ethnic identity. We are Americans because we believe in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights just as we are Muslims because we believe in the Quran as the word of God to man. The synergy between our Muslim identity and American identity can revive our dynamic understanding of Islam and, at the same time, contribute positively to America’s pluralism.*

- Dr. Maher Hahout

### **American Muslim, not Muslim-American**

Many Muslim academics and leaders in the US now purposefully stress use of the term American Muslim, instead of Muslim-American.<sup>107</sup> The distinction is not incidental. Many American Muslim academics, like Dr. Maher Hathout, director of the Islamic Center of Southern California, quoted above, strongly voice the need for Muslims in the US to adopt their new American cultural identity and actively engage in the larger society and its political processes.<sup>108</sup>

Dr. Qamar-ul Huda, assistant professor of Islamic Studies and Comparative Theology at Boston College, foresees a positive American identity emerging in second and third generation Muslims.<sup>109</sup> He argues American Muslims will not be defined by the “victimhood mentality” and “identity of vulnerability” of a religious community

---

<sup>107</sup> Khan, “Putting the American.”

<sup>108</sup> Edina Lekovic, “MPAC/ISPI Conference Tackles ‘American Muslim Identity’,” 22 November 2005, [http://www.mpac.org/home\\_article\\_display.aspx?ITEM=842](http://www.mpac.org/home_article_display.aspx?ITEM=842); Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism – San Francisco State University, “Immigrant Experience: A New American Muslim Generation,” 20 August 2003, [http://mediaguidetoislam.sfsu.edu/intheus/03d\\_experience.htm](http://mediaguidetoislam.sfsu.edu/intheus/03d_experience.htm).

<sup>109</sup> Qamar-ul Huda, “Forging an American Muslim Identity: Time for Alternative Muslim Institutions,” 15 July 2004, [http://www.muslimwakeup.com/main/archives/2004/07/forging\\_an\\_amer.php](http://www.muslimwakeup.com/main/archives/2004/07/forging_an_amer.php).

caught up in current world events and steered by the forces of “fundamentalist, reductionist, puritanical and symbolic Islam.”<sup>110</sup> Instead, Dr. Huda expects Muslims in America to discover their distinct culture in an experience paralleling that of immigrant Italian, Irish, Mexican and Jewish communities of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which “needed to reconcile the tension of denying elements of their history for validation from the majority.”<sup>111</sup> Dr. Khan views reconciliation and discovery of an American Muslim identity as carrying with it an emphatic call to action:

We need to continue to demonstrate that Muslims in this country constitute an ethical and philanthropic community that cares about humanitarian causes, about America and Americans and stands for justice and rights as embodied in the Constitution. Just like other ethnic groups before us, we have to pay our dues to this nation before we demand that they change themselves and the world for us . . . Muslims must realize that the interests of our sons and daughters, who are Americans, must come before the interests of our brothers and sisters, whether they are Palestinian, Kashmiri or Iraqi. Only then will Muslims in America become American Muslims.<sup>112</sup>

### **The Call for American Muslims to Serve**

The call to serve from these and many other scholars and Muslim advocacy groups is encouraging, a sign that the American military may soon be able to rely more heavily on a group that includes a substantial portion of the “talent pool” of native or heritage speakers of Arabic, provided other barriers to recruitment can also be removed.

### **Military or Muslim? Resolving the Clash of Loyalties**

Soon after the attacks of 9-11, Muslim military members began to voice concerns about the appropriateness of participating in military combat against Muslims in other

---

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Kahn, “Putting the American.”

countries. With 15,000 Muslim soldiers in the American armed forces, the senior Muslim chaplain, Muhammad Abdur-Rashid, sought clarification of the issue, and on 27 September 2001 received a fatwa (legal opinion) authorized and approved by six Muslim scholars and legal authorities.<sup>113</sup> The fatwa declared that “all Muslims ought to be united against all those who terrorize the innocents, and those who permit killing of non-combatants without a justifiable reason.”<sup>114</sup> Despite the difficulty of identifying and capturing the real perpetrators of such crimes, a Muslim soldier in the American military owes allegiance to his country, and “has no choice but to follow orders and perform his duty in this fight.”<sup>115</sup> While following orders, he cannot be held accountable for combat against other Muslims, as long as his intention is “to prevent aggression on the innocents, or to apprehend the perpetrators and bring them to justice.”<sup>116</sup>

The fatwa was confirmed and clarified at a press conference of the American Muslim Council on 11 October 2001.<sup>117</sup> One of the fatwa authors, Dr. Taha Jabir Al-alawani, stressed that American Muslims must defend their country, combat terrorism, and stand together with other Americans to protect the security interests of the country.<sup>118</sup> The issuance and acceptance of the fatwa opened the door for American Muslims to take a justifiable, active military service role in the Administration’s war to combat terrorism.

Unfortunately, it appears either the substance or significance of the fatwa was unknown to Sergeant Hassan Akbar, or he decided the war in Iraq did not satisfactorily meet its criteria, resulting in a moral conflict and the attacks on his fellow soldiers in

---

<sup>113</sup> Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi, et al., “Legal Fatwa,” 27 September 2001, [http://www.unc.edu/~kurzman/Qaradawi\\_et\\_al.htm](http://www.unc.edu/~kurzman/Qaradawi_et_al.htm).

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ali Farkhunda, “American Muslim Military Participation in the War – Clarified by American Muslim Scholars,” 11 October 2001, <http://www.icgt.org/SpecialArticles/MuslimsInMilitary.htm>.

April 2003.<sup>119</sup> In any event, the existence of the fatwa could provide some measure of solace and motivation to most Muslims currently in the American military, and may also help resolve the moral conflict which blocks other Arabic-speaking Muslims from responding to the call to serve in our military.

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Associated Press. "Akbar Convicted."

## **What Should We Be Doing?**

Circumstances appear to favor more active recruitment of native language speakers. If recent pronouncements by American Muslim scholars and organizations are any indication, there is a growing need to establish an American-Muslim identity that is linked to national values and a commitment to earning a place in American society and its political processes. While some prejudices and other social barriers persist, recent emphasis on the importance of critical language skills to our national security and plans to change the American mindset toward foreign language education are positive steps which may help encourage retention of native language skills and inclusion of immigrant populations. Additional efforts to increase awareness, understanding, and acceptance of heritage groups that can bring critical language and cultural skills, reducing incidents of discrimination and stereotyping in the military ranks, and increasing resources to support such groups can help create a more receptive environment for recruitment and retention.

While the issues discussed have primarily been focused on the need for Arabic language and cultural skills, they are by no means limited to that area. The lessons are applicable to native speakers of the other critical languages and of culture in other parts of the world where we are, and will be, engaged in conflict. Success in the current world environment demands proficiency in language skills other than English and an awareness and understanding of cultures other than our own. Without such skills, we will be unable to cope with the conflicts to come, particularly conflicts that are 4GW in character.

## ***Glossary***

4GW	Fourth Generation Warfare
ADC	Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee
CAIR	Council on Arab-Islamic Relations
DOD	Department of Defense
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IRR	Individual Ready Reserve
JFQ	Joint Force Quarterly
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
MPAC	Muslim Public Affairs Council
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
SWCS	Special Warfare Center & School
USAF	United States Air Force

## ***Bibliography***

- Al-Qaradawi, Sheik Yusuf, et al. "Legal Fatwa." 27 September 2001, [http://www.unc.edu/~kurzman/Qaradawi\\_et\\_al.htm](http://www.unc.edu/~kurzman/Qaradawi_et_al.htm).
- Associated Press. "Akbar Convicted of Murder." 22 April 2005, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,3566,154220,00.html>.
- Associated Press, "GI Wrote About Killing." 15 April 2005, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,3566,153490,00.html>.
- Associated Press. "Muslim Chaplain Gets Clean Slate." 15 April 2004, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/11/29/terror/585986.shtml>
- Bagby, Ihsan, et. al. "The American Mosque: A National Portrait." 26 Apr 2001, <http://www.cair-net.org/asp/populationstats.asp>.
- Barker, Drew W., PFC. "Marine Corps responds to demand for Arabic linguists." *Marine Corps News*, 5 May 2005. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2005/05/mil-050512-usmc06.htm>.
- Bowman, Tom. "Military aims to bolster language skills." *Peace Corps Online*, 2 January 2006, <http://peacecorpsonline.org/messages/messages/2629/2039494.html>.
- Burton, Janice. "Cultural skills – More than just language." *Tip of the Spear*, November 2005: 9.
- Bush, George W. "President's Remarks at U.S. University Presidents Summit on International Education," Office of the Press Secretary, Washington, D.C. 5 January 2006, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/01/20060105-1.html>.
- Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism – San Francisco State University. "Immigrant Experience: A New American Muslim Generation." 20 August 2003, [http://mediaguidetoislam.sfsu.edu/intheus/03d\\_experience.htm](http://mediaguidetoislam.sfsu.edu/intheus/03d_experience.htm).
- Center for Regional & Cultural Studies. "Need in General – See also 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report." 24 January 2006, <http://www.au.af.mil/culture/need.htm>.
- Chebli, Ivanna. "The Portrayal of Arabs in American Media." 2001, <http://iml.jou.edu/projects/Spring01/Chebli/page4/htm>.
- CNN. "Man questioned in shooting death of Sikh." 16 September 2001, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/16/gen.mesa.shooting>.
- Cordesman, Anthony H. "The Iraq War and Its Strategic Lessons for Counterinsurgency, Center for Strategic and International Studies." Washington DC. 8 Dec 2005.
- Farkhunda, Ali. "American Muslim Military Participation in the War – Clarified by American Muslim Scholars." 11 October 2001, <http://www.icgt.org/SpecialArticles/MuslimsInMilitary.htm>.
- Ferguson, Barbara. "US Marines Arming Themselves With Arabic." *Arab News*, 29 December 2004, <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=48section=08article=56724&day=29&m=12&y=2004>.



- Field, Lucian, Pfc USMC. "Why I Serve: Arabic-Speaking Marine Looks Forward to Iraq Deployment." *DefenseLINK News*, 10 November 2004, [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2004/n11102004\\_2004111015.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2004/n11102004_2004111015.html).
- German, Susan, Staff Sgt. "Cultural Sensitivity Makes a Difference." *Defend America News*, 19 October 2004, [http://222.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/dod/cultural\\_sensitivity.htm](http://222.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/dod/cultural_sensitivity.htm).
- Gilmore, Gerry J. "Bush Kicks Off National Foreign Language Initiative." *DefenseLINK News*, 5 Jan 2006, [http://defenselink.mil/news/Jan2006/20060105\\_3849.html](http://defenselink.mil/news/Jan2006/20060105_3849.html).
- Hinton, Leanne. "Involuntary Language Loss among Immigrants: Asian-American Linguistic Autobiographies." ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, December 1999, <http://www.ericdigests.org/2000-3/loss.htm>.
- Hirsh, E.D., Jr., Joseph F. Kett and James Trefil. *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, Third Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002, <http://www.bartleby.com/59/6/givemeyourti.html>.
- Huda, Qamar-ul., "Forging an American Muslim Identity: Time for Alternative Muslim Institutions." 15 July 2004, [http://www.muslimwakeup.com/main/archives/2004/07/forging\\_an\\_amer.php](http://www.muslimwakeup.com/main/archives/2004/07/forging_an_amer.php).
- Huntington, Samuel P. "The Hispanic Challenge." *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2004, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story\\_id=2495](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=2495).
- Khan, Muqtedar. "The Case for an American Muslim Identity – Barriers to American Muslims' political cohesiveness are largely internal." 28 Jul 2000, [http://www.beliefnet.com/story/35/story\\_3508\\_1.html](http://www.beliefnet.com/story/35/story_3508_1.html).
- Khan, Muqtedar. "Putting the American in 'American Muslim'." 7 September 2003, <http://www.ijtihad.org/NYTimes1.htm>.
- Lattin, Don. "Muslims in the military walk fine line – War tensions put pressure on rising minority." *San Francisco Chronicle*, 9 April 2003, <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/04/09/MN188241.DTL>.
- Lekovic, Edina. "MPAC/ISPI Conference Tackles 'American Muslim Identity'." 22 November 2005, [http://www.mpac.org/home\\_article\\_display.aspx?ITEM=842](http://www.mpac.org/home_article_display.aspx?ITEM=842).
- Lekovic, Edina. "MPAC Releases Survey on Attitudes of American Muslim Youth." 30 November 2005, <http://www.mpac.org>.
- Lukach, Terri. Army Native Linguist Recruiting Program, American Forces Press Service. 24 April 2005, [http://usmilitary.about.com/od/armyjoin/a/nativelinguist\\_p.htm](http://usmilitary.about.com/od/armyjoin/a/nativelinguist_p.htm).
- Mazzetti, Mark, Julian E. Barnes, and Edward T. Pound with David Kaplan and Linda Robinson. "Inside the Iraq Prison Scandal." In *The Art of Military Leadership Course I – Character and Influence*, AY 06. Edited by Sharon McBride, Maxwell AFB AL: Air Command and Staff College, August 2005: 95-99.
- McFate, Montgomery. "The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture." *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 38 (July 2005): 42-52.
- Melton, Ken, Cpl. "Kuwaiti-born Marine on Third Deployment in Iraq." *Defend America News*, 28 Oct 2005, <http://www.defendamerica.mil/articles/oct2005/a102805pj1.html>.
- Miles, Donna. "New Program Recruits Native Speakers into Army Guard." *DefenseLINK News*, 9 August 2005, [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Aug2005/20050809\\_2378.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Aug2005/20050809_2378.html).

- Modern Language Association. "Census Map: Number of speakers per language in the entire US." [http://www.mla.org/census\\_map](http://www.mla.org/census_map).
- Mount, Mike. "Marine 'hostage' charged with desertion." *CNN.com*, 10 December 2004, <http://www.cnn.com/2004/LAW/12/09/hassoun.desert/>.
- Munoz, Carlos. "Moseley-approved plans to revamp language, cultural training take shape." *Inside the Air Force*, 22 February 2006, <http://aimpoint.hq.af.mil/display.cfm?id=9537>
- Muslim Public Affairs Council. "Special Report: Religion and Identity of Muslim American Youth Post-London Attacks." 30 November 2005, [http://www.mpac.org/home\\_article\\_display.aspx?ITEM=842](http://www.mpac.org/home_article_display.aspx?ITEM=842).
- Parker, Laura. "The ordeal of Chaplain Yee." 16 May 2004, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2004-05-16-yee-cover\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2004-05-16-yee-cover_x.htm).
- PBS. "Not In Our Town - Attacks on Arab Americans Post 9/11." [http://www.pbs.org/niot/citizens\\_respond/losalstos.html](http://www.pbs.org/niot/citizens_respond/losalstos.html).
- Pyne, Solana. "Making Enemies – Post 9-11 Crackdowns Spurring Prejudice." *The Village Voice*, 9-15 July 2003, <http://www.villagevoice.com>.
- Schnell, Adam C., Cpl. "Arab Culture Classes Prepared Marines." *Defend America News*. 10 January 2005, <http://www.defendamerica.mil/articles/jan2005/a011005wd2.html>.
- Special Forces Language School. "Language Training." [http://www.training.sfahq.com/language\\_training.htm](http://www.training.sfahq.com/language_training.htm).
- Stern, Robert. "Foreign language initiative praised." *The Times of Trenton*. 22 Jan 2006, <http://www.ny.com/base/news-4.1137920754142390.xml&coll=5>.
- U.S. Census Bureau. "QT-P13. Ancestry: 2000." <http://factfinder.census.gov>.
- 22nd MEU. "Language skills add another tool to warriors' kitbags." *Marine Corps News*. 18 November 2005, <http://www.usmc.mil/marinelink/mcn2000.nsf>.